The Asian Film Archive (AFA) preserves the rich Asian cinematic heritage, encourages scholarly research, and promotes a wider critical appreciation of film.

Our mission is to save, explore and share the art of Asian Cinema while functioning as vibrant hubs of activity.
A new AFA team was hired to oversee theatre operations, enabling the presentation of AFA’s six weekly screenings of contemporary and classic Asian films. As of 31 March 2020, 220 AFA and partner programmes consisting of screenings, panel discussions and talks have been held at the Oldham Theatre, attended by more than 9,000 people.

As an archive dedicated to Asian cinema, AFA presented exclusive theatrical releases of highly acclaimed films that included *We Are Little Zombies* (Makoto Nagahisa, 2019), *House of Hummingbird* (Kim Bo Ra, 2018), *So Long, My Son* (Wang Xiaoshuai, 2019) and *Tel Aviv On Fire* (Sameh Zoabi, 2018).

To celebrate the re-opening of the newly renovated National Archives of Singapore building, AFA organised a special presentation of the newly restored *Chinta Kaseh Sayang* (Hussein Haniff, 1965) at the Oldham Theatre.
AFA IN THE NEWS

The AFA received significant coverage from different print, broadcast, and online media outlets, enabling more people to find out and learn about the work of the AFA. The Straits Times Life! highlighted AFA’s new screening programmes at Oldham Theatre with a front cover spread.

Women’s Weekly Singapore featured AFA on its print and online platforms with the magazine’s readers voting AFA’s Executive Director, Ms Karen Chan, for the “Most Inspiring Woman Award 2019”.

AFA’s preservation work was covered in a documentary on Channel News Asia and on segments on Channel 8.
As at 31 March 2020, the AFA Collection comprised of 2,451 film titles.

Developing and preserving the collection is the core business of the AFA.

Among new acquisitions were works by award-winning Asian filmmakers:

- **As You Were** (2014, Singapore) by Liao Jiekai
- **Citizen Jake** (2018, Philippines) by Mike de Leon
- **F** (2007, Singapore) by Chew Tze Chuan
- **Hill of No Return** (1992, Taiwan) by Toon Wang
- **Kommander Kulas** (2011, Philippines) by Khavn de la Cruz
- **Respire** (2005) by Widing Ho
- **Shotgun Tuding** (2014) by Shireen Seno
- **Sway** (2014, USA/Thailand) by Rooth Tang
- **Tourism** (2018, Japan) by Daisuke Miyazaki
- **Trespassed** (2016, Malaysia) by Ho Yuhang
- **Yasmin-san** (2017, Malaysia) by Edmund Yeo

Notable Asian short films by Edwin (Indonesia), Han Feng Yu, Tan Wei Keong and Shoki Lin (Singapore), Sorayos Prapapan (Thailand) were also added to the collection.

To encourage an appreciation of Asian films, the AFA’s collection is available for public reference at the library@esplanade and the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library at the National Library Building. 68 new titles were added to the reference collection in 2019. Film titles were continually catalogued, archival agreements were signed, and external loans were facilitated.

Digitisation of obsolete formats like Super 8mm, HDCam and mini DV was carried out to make the films accessible. More than 100 film titles were catalogued and loaned for external screenings.
To make more films available for viewing and research, the AFA restores films that have been preserved but are in deteriorating condition.


In 2019, two films from AFA's collection – *Miss Wonton* (Meng Ong, 2001) and *Pinoy Sunday* (Wi Ding Ho, 2009) were selected and supported for digitisation under the Asia Film Digitisation Project headed by the Korean Film Archive (KOFA). Two of AFA's archive officers were hosted by KOFA on a preservation study trip to the Paju Preservation Center.
A major aspect of AFA's work involves the organising of public programmes, ranging from events, exhibitions, screenings, and talks. In 2019, AFA and its partner organised programmes reached out to a total of 48,451 audience members. A wide demographic of participants from film scholars and enthusiasts, seniors, students, educators, and members of the public attended these events.

**OUTREACH**

Films that AFA restored travelled to various international film festivals and events in 2019.

- **Mee Pok Man** (Eric Khoo, 1995) screened at Busan Classics, Busan International Film Festival.
- **Batch 81** (Mike de Leon, 1982) screened at Guanajuato International Film Festival.
- **Batch 81** and **Nanyang Trilogy** (1957) showed at the “Origine” programme, a section dedicated to restored classics curated by the Fondazione Prada Cinema in Milan, Italy.
- **Ring of Fury** (Tony Yeow & James Sebastian, 1973) and **Forever Fever** (Glen Goei, 1998) screened at Urbanscapes Festival at Kuala Lumpur.
- **Moon Over Malaya** (Chun Kim & Chor Yuen, 1957) screened alongside restored classics at Bangkok ASEAN Film Festival. A second screening was held at the Film Archive (Public Organization), Thailand.

**SCREENINGS**

Still from **Mee Pok Man**. Courtesy of Zhao Wei Films
A host of new screening programmes were organised at Oldham Theatre under AFA’s banner of “Explore Asian Cinema”:

- **Faces of the Korean Woman** commemorated the 100 years of the birth of Korean cinema, exploring the multi-faceted portrayal of women in Korean film history between 1930s to 2010s.

- **SEA of Sadness** featured films and talks by key Southeast Asian filmmakers, curated by well-known festival programmer Gertjan Zuilhof.

- **Migratory Times** explored a series of Chinese language fictional films showing transitional times in Southeast and East Asia. Curated by Dr Elizabeth Wijaya, the programme included the world premiere of the restored *Blood and Tears of the Overseas Chinese* (1946) and a roundtable with specialists in Chinese, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong cinema and Shih Chun, a veteran actor in King Hu’s wuxia films.

- **Singaporeana!** a symposium and film programme that examined the authenticity, identity, architecture, nostalgia, sexuality of international film productions in Singapore during the 1960s – 1980s.

- The 4th edition of Asian Restored Classics featured screenings of restored masterpieces such as *The Horse Thief* (1986, China), *Ugetsu* (1953, Japan) and *Revenge* (1989, Kazakhstan). The world premiere of AFA’s restored *Letter to An Angel* (1994) by Garin Nugroho took place at the festival with the director in attendance.

- The 2nd edition of Singapore Shorts, an annual showcase of the best and most promising Singapore short films of 2019 saw well-attended screenings of official selections of short films and AFA’s collection highlights curated by renowned playwright/writer Alfian Sa’at.


AFA staff with guest panellists at REFRAME: Migratory Times
One of AFA’s signature events for the year was *State of Motion* (SoM), organised as part of National Art Council’s annual Singapore Art Week. In its 5th edition, SoM 2020: *Rushes of Time* was spread across two locations – ‘The Archive’ and ‘The Warehouse’ and the theme was a reflection on the relations between ideas of time, bodies of memory and the moving image through site-specific installations, live performances, film screenings, talks and guided curator tours.

The exhibition at the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) included a presentation by local artist-archivist Koh Nguang How, using his personal collection of materials on performance art; a reading room by artist-filmmaker Toh Hun Ping on his film research, a showcase of short films by pioneering filmmaker Rajendra Gour between the 1960s - 70s and a special section by AFA on its film preservation efforts.

The film programme for SoM 2020 was presented in two sections as a response to the exhibition: *Animating the Archive* and *Accessing the Archive*. The screenings showcased films that utilised the archives and highlights from the AFA collection.

From the video installations and filmic works of Tada Hengsapkul (Thailand), Nguyen Trinh Thi (Vietnam), Russell Morton (Singapore) to material and performative explorations by Sonya Lacey (New Zealand), Sriwhana Spong (New Zealand/UK), Liyana Ali (Singapore) and Pat Toh (Singapore), the featured artworks explored ways in which artists act as living mediums to gather and animate personal and collective histories.
To increase awareness on the importance of film preservation, AFA conducted a series of preservation talks to film students of LASALLE College of the Arts and Ngee Ann Polytechnic. AFA Archivist Chew Tee Pao conducted talks about the importance of film preservation to the student participants of the Singapore International Film Festival’s Youth Jury & Critics Programme.

School assembly talks were held throughout the year, on topics such as History through Singapore’s Film Locations, Introduction to Singapore Cinema and Social Issues Through Documentaries.

Over 6,600 educators and students were introduced to Asian films and to the work of the AFA. Some of the schools that engaged AFA were Dunman High School, East Spring Secondary School, Millenia Institute, Regent Secondary School and Woodgrove Secondary School. These AFA talks are endorsed by the National Arts Council’s Arts Education Programme that provide courses catering to students of various academic levels.

The exhibition for State Of Motion 2019: A Fear of Monsters was adapted into a roving display that toured at Cheng San Public Library and Jurong Regional Library. AFA partnered the National Library’s Content & Services team and created a video showcase of clips from culinary-themed films within AFA’s collection as part of The Arts Space – Makan-Makan display in the National Library building.

To promote appreciation and understanding of Asian cultures for students studying in western universities, AFA partnered the Oxford University Malaysian and Singapore Students’ Association (OUMSSA) and screened the restored The Teenage Textbook Movie to a diverse group of undergraduates and post-graduates.

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In conjunction to “State of Motion 2019: A Fear of Monsters”, AFA released its first book publication from the State of Motion series, featuring scholarly discourse on the monstrous and the horrific of national Asian cinemas examined against the histories, art and cinematic production. The book launch and panel discussion were held with scholars Bliss Cua Lim, Ekky Imanjaya, and artist Ho Rui An.

AFA has been aiding the work of researchers looking for Xin Ke, a 1926 silent film, reportedly the earliest known made in Singapore film. In 2019, AFA supported the publication launch of Xin Ke: The Story of Singapore and Malaya’s First Feature Film, the first in-depth look at the film that sheds light on local early cinematic history.

As part of AFA’s contribution to the film archiving industry, Chew Tee Pao (AFA Archivist) and representatives from EYE Filmmuseum and Library of Congress co-wrote an article, “Collecting Born-Digital Material at the Source: Acquisition Strategies and Lessons Learned” for publishing in the Journal of Digital Information Management. This article was an update of a joint presentation that the three institutions presented at the Association of Moving Archivists Conference in Portland, Oregon in 2018.

AFA presented at several local and international conferences, symposiums and talks over the year:

- Karen Chan (AFA Executive Director) presented a paper, “Evolving to Transform”, at Collections Care: Staying Relevant in Changing Times, ASEAN & Beyond organised by the Singapore Heritage Conservation Centre.

- At the invitation of the Korean Film Council, Karen presented about AFA’s work in Busan to film industry professional representatives from the 10 ASEAN countries and South Korea.

- Japan Foundation Asia Center and Athéniens Français Cultural Center in Tokyo hosted Karen who spoke at a symposium on Southeast Asian Cinema, organised as part of Tokyo International Film Festival and CROSSCUT ASIA.

- Karen shared about AFA’s work on film preservation at Creative Mornings Singapore, a monthly breakfast lecture series for creative communities.

- AFA invited by Xiamen University to speak about AFA’s work and its impact to the region’s cinema and AV archiving industry at the International Film Festival Forum.

- At the Southeast Asia Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives, (SARBICA) Symposium hosted by the National Archives of Singapore, Janice Chen (AFA Archive Officer) presented a paper on “Preserving Institutional Memory in the Digital Age”.

- Training for preservation in Southeast Asia is generally not easily available. As such, AFA supported the Southeast Asia Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives, (SARBICA) Symposium by organising a 2-day workshop on the Preservation of Art Materials: Joanne Fleming, a Digital Curation Specialist from NSW Library was invited by AFA to run the workshop that was attended by over 25 participants from government agencies and private institutions.

- AFA’s efforts in supporting local and international conferences have contributed to the growth of the film archiving industry, with a focus on preserving the historical and cultural heritage of Southeast Asia. The collaborative work with other institutions has resulted in joint presentations and publications, reflecting the shared commitment to the preservation of cinematic heritage.

- The book launch of “Xin Ke: The Story of Singapore and Malaya’s First Feature Film” in 2019 was significant for understanding the early cinematic history of Singapore. The publication provides a comprehensive look at the film that has been instrumental in the study of local cinematic development.

- AFA’s contributions to local and international conferences have played a crucial role in sharing best practices and knowledge on film preservation. The presentations and workshops have been instrumental in educating professionals and enthusiasts about the importance of preserving cinematic heritage.

- The collaborative efforts with institutions such as EYE Filmmuseum and Library of Congress have resulted in significant contributions to the field of film archiving. The joint presentation and publication of “Collecting Born-Digital Material at the Source” highlights the importance of digital preservation strategies in the modern age.

- The support of Xiamen University for a workshop on the preservation of institutional memory in the digital age indicates a growing awareness of the challenges associated with digital preservation in Southeast Asia. The workshop’s attendance by professionals and institutions reflects the need for capacity building in this region.

- The ongoing efforts of AFA in supporting local and international conferences, symposiums, and talks underscore the organisation’s commitment to the preservation of cinematic heritage in Southeast Asia. The collaborative approach and the sharing of knowledge contribute to the growth of the film archiving industry and the appreciation of cinematic history.
For the second year, AFA was the film curation partner for Singular Screens, a film programme of the Singapore International Festival for the Arts that featured an Asian and international selection of 22 exceptional new works celebrating independent voices across the world. Screened at The Arts House and at the new Oldham Theatre, the event featured works like Demons by Daniel Hui, Nakorn-Sawan by Puangsua Akorsawang and Present, Perfect by Shengze Zhu.

Collaborating with the Singapore Film Commission who organised the B.Y.O Cinema outdoor screening series, audiences were treated to a screening of the AFA-restored Forever Fever.

In support for NLB’s Read! Fest 2019, AFA curated a series of eight films and documentaries based on the theme, “Voyage”, with some films that were screened for the first time in Singapore - Meditation Park (Mina Shum, 2018), Namdev Bhau: In Search of Silence (Dar Gai, 2018) and The Eternity Between Seconds (Alec Figuracion, 2018).

AFA supported Perspectives Film Festival, the annual film festival fully run by Nanyang Technological University students.

AFA was a programme partner of the 30th Singapore International Film Festival.
Volunteers are vital to the realisation of the AFA’s mission, providing much-needed extra manpower and expertise to help carry out the variety of work within the AFA. Apart from assisting with front-of-house events, volunteers perform a host of preservation related work such as scanning related materials, cataloguing films, cleaning and re-canning film reels, and migrating formats.

AFA commemorated World Day for Audiovisual Heritage by recognising the invaluable help and integral role that its volunteers play in helping with AFA’s preservation and outreach activities. A total of 675 hours was put in by volunteers over the year.

We thank these individuals for their time and support.

Catherine Tang  
Cecilia Yeow  
Chîu Anh Cao  
Chris Driver  
Clarice Loke  
Daphne Condecido  
Donovan Wan  
Erika Danielle Tupaz Fajîlagot  
Erîsa Sharîda  
Estee Faith Leong  
Evangeline Farn  
Evelyn Tan  
Gloria Sun  
Goh Lin Yuan  
Han Feng Yu  
Isabel Buizon  
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Natalie Le  
Regina Chee  
Ryan Lim  
Sarah Yong  
Sean Yap  
Sherafina Alyani  
Simone Tam  
Siti Nadia  
Weichuan  
Yang Yang  
Yo Shao Ann  
Young Wei Ping

Like many industries, the Archive faces the difficulty of retaining young staff long enough for them to gain experience, a problem that is particularly trying for a niche industry like film archiving. AFA is glad that in 2019, it was able to reward and recognise the contributions of three of its staff who have been with AFA for between five and ten years.

10-years long service  
• Chew Tee Pao (Archivist)

5-years service  
• Christina Mak (Operations Executive)  
• Thong Kay Wee (Outreach Officer)

AFA staff coaching volunteer on film-cleaning.
The Archive is governed by a board of directors who ensures that the Archive is effective in pursuing its mission and is accountable to the public.

- All board members are volunteers and are not remunerated for their Board services. They are wholly independent from the paid executive management of the Archive. Board members hold various responsibilities to review and oversee areas in audit and finance, programmes and services, fundraising and partnership, and human resource.

- The Executive Director leads the management team to execute strategies, policies, and business practices. The Executive Director reports regularly to the Board about the Archive’s management, operations, and finances.

- Board members or paid staff are required to declare actual or potential conflicts of interest to the Board immediately. Board members with conflicts of interest do not vote or participate in decision making in the matter. Paid staff with conflicts of interest are required to obtain approval from the Board. All staff and Board make an annual declaration of having understood all policies, procedures, and potential conflicts of interest between staff and the Archive.

- Board meetings are held quarterly to review the Archive’s performance and approve strategic work plans. The Chair convenes optional meetings when necessary, to discuss matters that require the Board’s deliberation.

- To promote transparency and to be publicly accountable, the Archive makes available an annual report in print and on its website, with disclosure on its financial accounts.

- The Archive adopts a set of internal guidelines that lay out financial authorisation and approval limits for financial commitment. The Board ensures that the internal reviews on controls, procedures, and key programmes are adhered to.

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The role as custodian to Asia’s rich film and cinematic heritage is one that AFA takes seriously and is committed towards for the long term. To this end, AFA will strive to manage its collection responsibly and effectively, enabling accessibility and usability.

Purposeful partnerships and collaborations will be established and maintained to promote Asian cinema and to advance the archiving profession.

Providing different access platforms to the collection will be a key focus in the coming years. At risk and orphan films will be a priority as the team keeps an eye out for abandoned and materials that are not being archived by any other heritage institution. Restoration projects of older titles will be implemented to give once inaccessible films a new lease of life.

With the Oldham Theatre, generating well curated screenings and education programmes that meet the needs and demands of its users and researchers, remain a top priority. Increasing interest across disciplines and growing new audiences for Asian films will be a challenging but exciting endeavour.

To meet the growing collection and expanded range of programmes, training opportunities will be catered for the staff to gain experience and exposure so that they can improve their expertise required to run the Archive effectively.

The Archive is keenly aware of the important roles that the different stakeholders play in building the strength of this institution. Engaging the community and maintaining exchanges with current and new stakeholders is an area that AFA will cultivate. We will therefore continue to actively engage our board members, staff, volunteers, partners, and donors.
In keeping with standard practices amongst archives, the Asian Film Archive does not capitalise its collections. It does not have an endowment fund and the only investment income is from interest.

The summaries presented below are the Archive’s financial position and performance as of 31 March 2020.

The financial statements were audited by Ernst & Young LLP, Public Accountants and Certified Public Accountant Singapore.

### 31 MARCH 2020

#### ASSETS

Current assets:
- Cash & cash equivalents: $155,914
- Trade & other receivables: $638,196
- Prepayments: $65,935
- Inventories: $91,500

Non-current assets:
- Plant & equipment: $71,671

Total assets: $1,023,216

#### FUNDS AND LIABILITIES

Current liabilities:
- Trade and other payables: $405,616

Funds:
- Net assets: $617,600
- Total equity: $617,600
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every acquisition, preservation, restoration, film programme, presentation, exhibition, workshop, and talk would not have been possible without our donors and supporters for the financial year ended 31 Mar 2020. We thank them sincerely for their generosity.

DONORS

CinemaWorld (Asia) Pte Ltd
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Ho Vui Chan
Liew Kai Khiun (Dr)

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National Arts Council
National Library Board Singapore
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Taiwan Film Institute

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(A/N 10 December 2019)
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Natalie Ng
Engagement Officer
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(The N 5 July 2019)
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Diane Toh
Theatre Services Technician
Rahim Bin Rahmat
Student Intern
Yow Kai En Carissa
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Every acquisition, preservation, restoration, film programme, presentation, exhibition, workshop, and talk would not have been possible without our donors and supporters for the financial year ended 31 Mar 2020. We thank them sincerely for their generosity.

AFA is a registered charity and an Institution of Public Character (IPC). Cash donations in Singapore entitle donors to receive tax deductions.

If you would like to make a gift to the Archive in support of its work, you can do so by:

• Cheque made payable to Asian Film Archive
• Online donation via the giving.sg portal managed by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre.

ADDITIONAL PHOTO CREDITS

Cover design image from Bambaru Avith (1978)
Courtesy of Kusumalatha Malini Pathiraja

Still from Kaki Bakar (1995)
Courtesy of U-Wei Haji Saari

Still from Pinoy Sunday (2009)
Courtesy of Widing Ho

Still from Miss Wonton (2001)
Courtesy of Meng Ong

Still from Money No Enough (1998)
Courtesy of J Team Productions

Still from Demons (2018)
Courtesy of 13 Little Pictures

Still from Forever Fever (1998)
Courtesy of Tiger Tiger Productions

Still from Namdev Bhau: In Search of Silence (2018)
Courtesy of Jugaad Motion Pictures

Still from My Magic (2008)
Courtesy of Zhao Wei Films